

April 18, 1966

Telephone conversation with Dr. Maurice Visscher.

Dr. Visscher: I tried to get you back from Atlantic City and tried to find out where you were going to be in Bethesda, but your secretary didn't know.

Dr. Dennis: We were at a Surgery Study Section meeting, but it makes no difference. What I want to know is this. Lowell Greenbaum sent a letter or a wire, I don't know which, to Bob Moore, the Dean here, urging him to lend support to the ^{Helgeson} Olson and Mondale bills. The dean flared up and sent back what I thought was a most intemperate letter indicating that he was sick and tired of the State Society for Medical Research recommending one thing when the National Society for Medical Research is recommending something else, and indicating that he had recently gotten a letter urging him to support the Poage bill, of all things.

Dr. Visscher: From whom?

Dr. Dennis: He said from the State Society, but they sent no such thing out from the State Society and I didn't know -

Dr. Visscher: No, we never sent anything out saying that we supported the Poage bill. What we did say, and this is true, that the revised version - the presently amended version - of the Poage bill is something that if we had to we could live with. I've been very careful not to advise anyone that the Poage bill was the best thing we could get. We don't know what the Commerce Committee is going to come out with.

Dr. Dennis: Yes, we've no idea, of course. Well anyway, the point of my question is this, that the Dean went on in another paragraph in his letter to Lowell Greenbaum indicating that if the New York State Society didn't stop this sort of thing he was going to communicate with all the other deans in the State of New York and tell them to pull out and not support the State Society and that he thought it was high time the State Society and the National Society did things in unison.

Dr. Visscher: This in principal is correct.

Dr. Dennis: Is it correct that they're not done in unison now?

Dr. Visscher: Well, this is strictly off the record. We had in January a meeting at which time (this was just before the Council meeting of the NSMR) I met with the Executive Committee of the State Society, and they indicated to me they were very much concerned about the fact that we did not have a bill that we could support in the area of procurement, and I said I agreed with them; that in the area of procurement we were more or less defenseless and that I would like to have a committee of the National Society and I said that I would agree to appoint two or three people from the New York State Society to serve on this committee and actually I did get Wally Riker to serve as chairman, and got Leonard Procita to serve on the committee thinking that if we had a person like Riker and the most vocal person, namely Leonard, on the committee, that this would probably be enough representation of

the New York State Society and appointed four other people from different parts of the country. They had a meeting - Bill Kubichek was on the committee - in New York shortly before the House hearings were to come up and they agreed to a version which turned out ultimately to be the Nelson bill, which as you know, with the exception of one additional phrase, is duplicated in the Mondale bill in the Senate. Now, it was my understanding that they would be satisfied with this as the legislation that we should, at this juncture, hurry about to introduce, and therefore I was very much surprised to learn when they came here, when Lowell came here, at the time of the Senate hearings, the Senate Commerce Committee hearings, that the New York State Society Executive Committee had instructed him to have another housing and care bill introduced, and they did not consult us at all about this. I let Lowell know, although I didn't see anything terribly bad about their bill, and it probably wasn't going to be too far from what the Administration bill would turn out to be, that I didn't think that it was a good idea to do this unilaterally. I've given you this rather long story because, although I'm not terribly worried about that bill that they've had introduced by O'Brien and actually there is a tactical advantage in having O'Brien really in essence dissociate himself from the old bill when he put in the companion bill to the Rogers bill, this is all to the good in a way, but if you ask me whether Bob Moore is 100% wrong - no he's not. In other words, they did jump the gun, and I think unwisely, in not having let the rest of the family know what they were up to. I was particularly surprised because when I had the meeting with the Executive Committee we indicated that we were going to try very hard to have a sort of new deal in the organization. They knew that we were not going to keep Rohweder in his prior position. They were particularly unhappy with Ralph Rohweder. You know that.

Dr. Dennis: Yes, I know.

Dr. Visscher: And for good reason.

Dr. Dennis: Yes, I thought so.

Dr. Visscher: I don't think there was anything wrong about their objection to what Rohweder had done, but, be that as it may, I was hoping that this would be a complete new deal. Now you use this.

Dr. Dennis: Lowell was very upset to receive this letter from Bob Moore and he wanted to know if I wouldn't go to Bob Moore and reassure him that the two organizations were working in very close coordination.

Dr. Visscher: We are for the most part, and Lowell has said this; that he has no intention of really pushing that bill, and that they did it because they felt so strongly that something had to be done.

Dr. Dennis: Yes, he told me about it afterward.

Dr. Visscher: I wish they hadn't done it, but such is life. Now you can tell Bob for me that I believe that we are going to get along very well with the New York group, and that I hope that - you might as well tell him that we didn't know anything about this bill they put in, but that as far as supporting the Mondale bill is concerned, this we asked them to do. This is definitely what we asked them to do.

Dr. Dennis: Well I'll stress that point.

Dr. Visscher: It's too bad that there are any misunderstandings within our group. I trust it doesn't really amount to anything. You see, I'm a little surprised that Bob Moore should be quite as upset about it because he was one of the people on Board of Directors, before he resigned, who wanted us to fire Ralph Rohweder long before he himself turned in his resignation. Bob Moore was just terribly annoyed with Rohweder.

Dr. Dennis: I didn't know that.

Dr. Visscher: Oh yes, and you can tell Bob, if you're going to see him, that we are getting a new Executive Director and that we expect that there will be quite a different tone to the external and internal relations of the NSMR. Ralph didn't do us any good, you know.

Dr. Dennis: I thought he was very damaging.

Dr. Visscher: Well, he was, and yet you know when you had a person in a position for 20 years and the elective board that is presumably responsible for it doesn't take all the responsibility it should, it's awfully easy for an executive director to run away with the ball and feel that he's doing right in doing so. There is that side of the story too, you see.

Dr. Dennis: There's ^{was} very little activity.

Dr. Visscher: This was partly the fault of the Board.

Dr. Dennis: I could agree.

Dr. Visscher: I hope to get it straightened around. You could tell Bob that we are on friendly terms with everybody in the New York State Executive Committee group, and that although we aren't too happy that they jumped the gun on this bill, we don't really think it's going to do any harm.

Dr. Dennis: Alright, I'll pass that along. You know they put me on that Executive Committee with the express reason that I would perhaps be in a favorable position to cement the relationships between the two groups.

Dr. Visscher: Well you are.

Dr. Dennis: This I'm extremely anxious to do. I think it's very important.

Dr. Visscher: I do too. Incidentally, I've just read your letter to the New York Times as of April 10.

Dr. Dennis: Did it look alright?

Dr. Visscher: It's a wonderful letter. It's perfect. You did a wonderful job.

Dr. Dennis: Good, well I was glad to get it in. The last one that was sent in Lowell Greenbaum sent in and they never published.

Dr. Visscher: I know. He told me.

Dr. Dennis: I don't know why. It was a bit vituperative.

Dr. Visscher: Well that's what they don't like. Incidentally, I had a look at this little paper that you sent Owen on the metal sutures the other day. He asked me to look at it. I think it's an interesting idea.

(Sanger's old sutures)

Dr. Dennis: I don't know why it works. It looks as though the fiberblasts are aligned in a more uniform fashion and this might conceivably be the explanation, but we really don't have the explanation.

Dr. Visscher: Well, it's an interesting approach.

Dr. Dennis: It would be very nice to have it all unravelled.

Dr. Visscher: Thanks for calling.

Dr. Dennis: Thank you very much.